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ABSTRACT

Voluntarily initiated student verbal behaviors originating during classroom communication related to values awareness are identified, defined, and illustrated by examples. These behaviors are: (1) focus setting; (2) reporting course of action; (3) reporting value judgment; (4) reporting value; (5) reporting prediction; (6) reporting data; and (7) data generating. In addition, student silence and structural breakdown present other realities in classroom verbal communication, as do the addition of qualifying specifications to behaviors two, three, and four. (MJB)

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Dalstra Values Awareness Teaching Strategy
Inservice Education Program

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VOLUNTARILY-INITIATED STUDENT BEHAVIORS RELATED TO THE OPEN-ENDED DISCUSSION AND VALUES AWARENESS TEACHING STRATEGY

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A DESCRIPTION OF THE VOLUNTARILY-INITIATED STUDENT BEHAVIORS

Helping students learn to communicate effectively and developing their ability to explicate their own values doesn't happen just because students have an opportunity to talk to each other in the classroom. Achieving these ends with students requires several teacher competencies. One of these competencies is the ability to diagnose what it is the students are doing as they participate in such lessons. What the students do is a base from which the teacher decides what he or she should do in response.

Seven student behaviors related to the DALSTRA Values Awareness Teaching Strategy have been identified. They are:

1. FOCUS SETTING 3
2. REPORTING COURSE OF ACTION 3
3. REPORTING VALUE JUDGMENT 4
4. REPORTING VALUE 6
5. REPORTING PREDICTION 6
6. REPORTING DATA 7
7. DATA GENERATING 7
8. STUDENT SILENCE 8
9. STRUCTURE BREAKDOWN 8
10. ADDING THE SPECIFICATION OF A CONDITION TO RCA, RVJ, OR RV 9
11. THE REALITIES OF VERBAL COMMUNICATION 9

On the pages which follow, each of these student behaviors is described along with a few examples.

FOCUS SETTING *(FS)*

Identifying a topic or issue for discussion. This student behavior includes those instances in which the student: (1) presents a new topic, (2) revises or restates a topic presented by the teacher or another student, (3) selects a topic for discussion from among alternatives, (4) indicates a shift in the discussion to a different topic, or (5) questions another student to determine if the other student has shifted to a different topic.

S: *Can we talk about teenage marriage?* (Presents)

S: *To me, it's not the integration of blacks and whites we should be talking about, but rather the integration of all racial groups.* (Revises)

S: *Of all those topics we have listed on the board, I'd like to discuss the vandalism issue.* (Selects)

S: *Hey, Charlie, when you talked about putting a bench outside the vice principal's office, it seems to me that you were talking about what we should do with the money we earn, rather than how we should earn some money in the first place.* (Indicates Shift)

S: *Jan, when you said you thought that child molesters should be severely punished, weren't you talking about another issue?* (Questions)

REPORTING COURSE OF ACTION *(RCA)*

Reporting some action the individual might take or proposing some action someone else should take to resolve the issue under discussion. Usually people report a course of action because it seems to be a viable alternative to them. That is, they think it's a good thing to do. Regardless of any implied or expressed value judgment which may be part of the proposed action to be taken, this student behavior is classified only as an *(RCA)*.

S: *An alternative is to provide kids with the chance to get into their own values in school. (RCA* with no implied value judgment)

S: *Parents should teach their kids to respect people who are different. (RCA* with implied value judgment)

S: *The best thing to do about vandalism at schools is to charge their parents for any damages their kids cause.* (*RCA* with expressed value judgment)

More sophisticated *RCA* student behaviors include some specification of the circumstances or conditions under which the course of action reported would be most appropriate or effective. Reporting Course of Action with Conditions is recorded *RCAC*.

S: *If he has a good relationship with Chicanos, he would be able to tell Manuel he really didn't mean to put Chicanos down by what he said. If he doesn't have that kind of a relationship, I don't know what he should do.*

REPORTING A VALUE JUDGMENT *(RVJ)*

Making a comment that directly communicates good or bad, agree or disagree, right or wrong. All value judgments include two elements. One element specifies worth or lack of worth and is the judgment. The second element specifies what is being judged. For example, in the statement, *The book was superb*, the word, *superb*, is the judgment and *book* is what is being judged. Often in a discussion, what is being judged may be implicit rather than explicit. For example, *"I agree with Philomena."* is intended to mean, *"I agree with Philomena's suggestion, which is..."*

People may communicate a judgment in a variety of ways. For example, they may use swear words *(Oh pshaw!!!)*, colloquialisms *(It's going to the dogs)*, value words *(He's an honest fellow)*, polar words *(That's great/awful)*, rhetorical questions *(You really think that?)*, trigger words *(Dr. Farquardt is Un-American)*, or gross over-statements *(Everyone will end up using pot)*. While some of these ways of communicating a judgment may at first glance appear to be a prediction, reporting data, or data generating, the person's tone of voice, inflection or non-verbal behavior provides the best clue to the intent of the individual's comment.

People may make value judgments about their own behavior, the behavior of others, an object, event, idea, a particular person or people in general, a condition, place, institution, prediction, course of action, judgment, and so on. In other words, people may make a value judgment about anything!!!

S: *I like Paris in the Spring time.*

S: *You really are a warm human being, Val.*

S: *I don't think bussing is a solution to the integration problem.*

S: *Anyone who tries to jive me because I'm black is a phony.*

S: *That's a great idea.*

More sophisticated *RVJ* student behaviors may include the specification of the circumstances or conditions when the value judgment would be most relevant. Reporting a Value Judgment with conditions is recorded *RVJC*.

S: *If it will speed things along, I think that's a good way to go.*

REPORTING VALUE *(RV)*

Making a value statement. Value statements may be made about one's own value(s), the value(s) of another person, the value(s) of groups, etc. A value statement includes three elements. One element is the important characteristic. Another element is the label *value* applied to the important characteristic. The third element of a value statement is the referent for that value. These three elements of a value statement may occur in any sequence.

S: *Trustworthiness is one of my values when it comes to choosing my friends.*

S: *One of my values about drug treatment programs is that they are readily available to those who wish to use them.*

S: *From what I heard Yoshi say, I think that one of her values about teachers is that teachers treat boys and girls the same.*

As students gain increasing insight into their values and are able to report their values during a discussion, they may also specify the conditions under which the expressed values would be a primary concern. Reporting a Value with Conditions is recorded *RVC*.

REPORTING PREDICTION *(RP)*

Forecasting data. Usually, in the context of a discussion, the data forecast are anticipated outcomes that may result from implementing an implied or expressed course of action.

S: *I know what's going to happen if you do away with the dress code in school; there will be an increase in disciplinary problems.*

S: *If we don't do something about the syphilis problem, we're going to have a lot of people who will go blind and insane.*

S: *Sure, if you do that, you'll end up hiring women because they're women instead of because they can do the job.*

A prediction is often given as a rationale for a course of action or a value judgment.

REPORTING DATA *(RD)*

Reporting data is making a statement about data the individual has or needs. Data is the specification of: (1) non-judgmental characteristics of a person, place, event, institution, object; or (2) non-judgmental descriptions of conditions of some place, object, institution, event, person, or the psychological or physiological state of an individual; (3) observable human behavior; or (4) one person's belief about the motivation, reasons, or purposes for the behavior of another person. The validity or accuracy of any data cited are not criteria considered in classifying a student behavior.

S: *Farnsworth told me he got impetigo from smoking marijuana.*

S: *I heard that women make up 38% of the work force.*

S: *A methadone maintenance program is one legal way that people who are dependent on heroin can meet the need.*

S: *Look at that, one of Frieda's eyes is crossed!*

S: *People who give you a dare do it because they like to give orders to other people.*

S: *I need to know what happens to people who have syphilis and don't get treatment for it.*

S: *I ate lunch in the cafeteria today and I feel sick.*

Data is often reported as a rationale for a course of action or a value judgment.

DATA GENERATING *(DG)*

Asking a question or taking some other action to generate data the individual thinks or believes to be relevant to a topic under discussion.

S: *Tell me how much traffic on the freeway in the evening comes from the central part of the city.*

S: *What percentage of students with Spanish surnames speak Spanish?*

S: *What happens to people who have syphilis and don't get treatment for it?*

S: *Which way are Frieda's eye crossing?*

STUDENT SILENCE *(SS/TS)*

The absence of any verbal communication or goal directed activity by the students and teacher during a discussion. Those instances when the teacher is not speaking and it is the groups' responsibility to maintain the discussion. While Student Silence is a group behavior, it is coded in both the student and teacher column on the "T" system.

S: .....

STRUCTURE BREAKDOWN *(STRB)*

The occurrence of individual or group behavior during a lesson which, in the teacher's judgment, is contrary to the specified lesson structure.

S: *Frieda, you must be stupid if you see things that way!*

S: *Members or the group begin talking to each other in conversation groups while one member of the group is trying to speak.*

ADDING THE SPECIFICATION OF A CONDITION TO *RCA*, *RVJ*, OR *RV*

When people report a course of action, a value judgment, or a value to be acted on, they frequently add a condition or conditions that they feel must exist if they are to 1) choose the course of action, 2) make that value judgment, or 3) view the specified value as applicable in that circumstance.

To state a condition is to add a variable, circumstance, or qualification to an *RCA*, *RVJ*, or *RV* which was not given in the setting or focus setting question. Thus adding a condition to an *RCA*, *RVJ*, or *RV* is recorded on the "T" System simply by adding a "C" to the *RCA*, *RVJ*, or *RV* and would look as follows:

RCAC: *I think he should take the dare (RCA) if it isn't dangerous. (C)*

RVJC: *I agree with John (RVJ) if we can save money and still get the job done that way. (C)*

RVC: *One of my values about dealing with people is honesty (RV), if it doesn't hurt their feelings. (C)*

THE REALITIES OF VERBAL COMMUNICATION

While several voluntarily-initiated student behaviors have been specified and defined on the preceding pages, it's important to recognize that these behaviors occur as people attempt to communicate with each other. As a result, these behaviors must be interpreted within the realities of such communication.

A discussion is a dynamic process, not only because people are actively engaged in listening to each other, but at the same time people are creating new ideas, changing their ideas, and thinking of ways of expressing those ideas. And this creating, modifying, and thinking of ways to express ideas actually happens while people speak to each other. The effect of this is to frequently create some problems for the listener. For example, it may be necessary to listen to a long, convoluted statement before the message becomes clear. Or even after having done so the message may remain convoluted and unclear! We're not suggesting that thinking as one speaks is good or bad. Rather, it's the natural way people participate in a discussion when they're engaged in wrestling with ideas that are important to them.

As people interact, they frequently rely on verbal shorthand by using only a word or phrase to communicate a more detailed idea. In this instance, such "Shorthand" ways of speaking rely on the discussion context and non-verbal cues to communicate the intended messages to someone else. For example, a teacher's comment, *Hold it down!* may mean quite different things to his or her students in different situations. During a discussion, this comment may be interpreted to mean that several students are talking at one time or that other students in the class are making too much noise. On the other hand, in a shop class, the same comment may mean that a student may be working on a machine in an unsafe manner. At the site of a class on flying hot air balloons, *Hold it down!* might mean something quite different.

The context of a situation isn't the only factor that helps the listener interpret the meaning of the shorthand way of speaking. Voice pitch and loudness, gestures, and so on enable others to bring meaning to the comments. Imagine different ways you might say *Hold it down!* in each of the situations described earlier.